

Yeonbuk but saw no sign of Paul and Shelley. It turns out they had decided the avalanche threat was too high and headed back to base camp the day before.

“Ok, good, we’ve climbed something,” we said, before heading down. By the time we got back to our camp in the cwm at 9 p.m. the weather had packed in, and descending the icefall the next day was a little fraught. Walking back down the glacier in a whiteout/thunderstorm my hat started to smolder! We propose the name Miandi Peak for the previously unclimbed 6,400m mountain, because it sits above the Miandi Barmak.

PAT DEAVOLL, *New Zealand*

*Arwa Spire and Kalanka, attempts.* In June a Korean team led by Park Heungsoo attempted Arwa Spire but was defeated by bad weather and snowfall. In August and September a Dutch team led by Mike Van Berkel failed on Kalanka because of bad weather, and in September and October a Czech team led by Petr Masek failed at 5,200m on the north face of Kalanka, also because of continuous bad weather.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

*Panpatia Glacier, exploration.* The trail from Badrinath to Kedarnath Valley, as followed by the team of Shipton and Tilman, is a fascinating piece of history. Their trail via the Gandharpongi Valley was followed by a British team led by Martin Moran. There was a route from the nearby Panpatia Glacier to cross a pass toward the southern valley, giving an easier exit to the Kedar Valley. The exploration was completed this year by a team led by Tapan Pandit, from West Bengal. In June they entered the Khirao valley and reached its head where the Panpatia Bamak (glacier) lies. Following the northern edge of the glacier, they crossed Parvati Col to reach the upper plateau. Traversing southwest on this plateau they crossed Panpatia Col and descended to Kachni Tal and Madhyamaheshwar. Previous parties had tried this crossing from both directions and failed. With this historic crossing the routes of earlier explorations are now joined.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

*Kagbhusandi Tal, Peak AC 150 (5,030m), Dhanesh Parvat (5,490m), Kankul Peak (5,080m).* To celebrate the links between the Alpine Club and the Himalayan Club in the year of the AC’s 150th anniversary, Harish Kapadia organized an expedition to the Kagbhusandi Valley, which he had first entered in May and June of 2006. Hathi Parvat and Otika Danda had been climbed, but other peaks around the valley had not been touched. Harish’s interest in the climbing potential of the area was shared by Atul Rawal and four British alpinists: Chris Astill, Mick Cotnam, Mark Higton, and I.

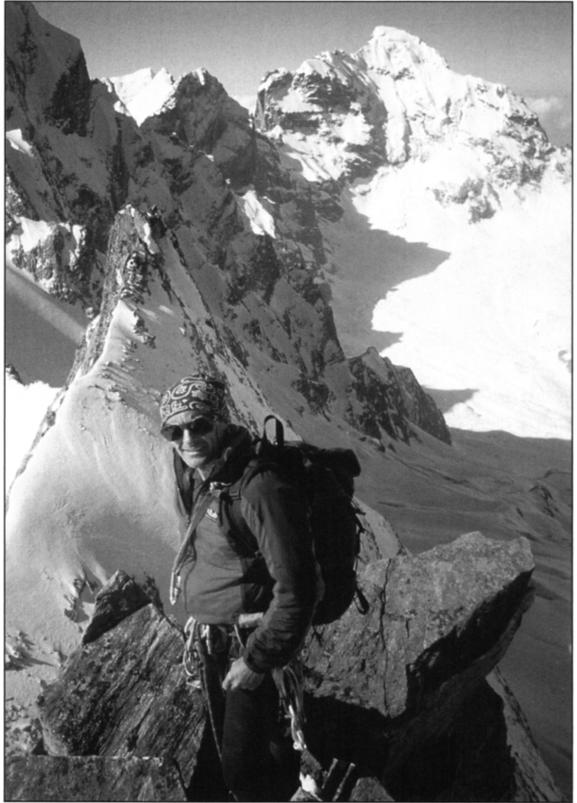
The approach involved taking the night train from Delhi to Haridwar and a day’s drive to Joshimath, where we spent a couple of days acclimatizing at Auli while we obtained permits. A further drive along the Badrinath Road brought us to Govindghat, the popular starting point for Hemkund and the Valley of Flowers, where the walk-in began. On the first day’s trek we had a timely reminder of the Alpine and Himalayan Clubs’ links with tradition by a chance meeting with Nanda Sinh Chauhan. Now ninety-four years old, he was with Frank Smythe in 1931 and 1937 when Smythe discovered the Valley of Flowers. Leaving the main trail at Bhuidhar, we

trekked up the Kagbhusandi Valley in three days to a base camp at Chhaiyan Kharak (3,815m), with Hathi Parvat (6,727m) towering to the north.

First impressions were clouded by the weather. Days of monsoon-like rain on the approach had delivered at least 30cm of soft snow at 4,000m, despite the heat of the sun, when it appeared. This was unusual, but not unprecedented. In 2006 Harish had been turned back from the Kankul Khal pass by deep snow in early May. Scheduling the 2007 expedition for the last week of May should have overcome the problem but hadn't. Climbing was exhausting, when each step sank us knee-deep in snow. Even the proposed trek out over the Kankul Khal around June 12 proved impossible, since snow remained too deep for porters to carry loads over the pass.

Despite the difficult snow conditions, Mick and I made an early ascent to the Kankul Khal, recording a GPS reading of 4,665m, and Mark joined us for a night out on the upper Barmal Glacier, where we obtained good views of the peaks at the head of the glacier and the Barmal Khal, a newly discovered pass of over 5,000m. Our whole team made several forays up the steep flanks of the valley, hoping to spot likely lines to climb. Many ridges and couloirs attracted attention, but looked to be tough propositions in the conditions, with the ridges plastered with snow and the couloirs avalanching. When conditions improved, we climbed three peaks, all first ascents.

We approached the first from a camp at 4,300m below the Kankul Khal. The mountain lay immediately west of the pass, and we climbed it by its northeast flank. A wide stone chute enabled us to access the first snowfield, which we crossed to a 50m wall, where a line of weakness up crumbling rock led to a second snowfield. This narrowed to a broad ridge with a distinctly steeper spur toward the top. At the spur Mick and Chris took to the couloir flanking the ridge to the east, then gained the crest of the ridge from the top of the couloir, but owing to a concern about avalanche danger in the couloir, Mark and I took the spur directly, in four pitches of about Scottish 3. We all joined for the east ridge and face, climbing four more pitches of mixed ground to gain a massive granite block that we originally took for the summit. The true summit lay 60m along a narrow snow ridge beyond and gave a GPS reading of 5,030m.



Mick Cottam on the summit of Danesh Parvat after the successful first ascent via the west ridge, north face, and east face. *Dave Wynne-Jones*



Mick Cottam leading the first pitch on the east face of the summit block of Danesh Parvat (5,490m) in the Central Garhwal's Kagbhuisandi Valley. *Dave Wynne-Jones*

Consensus graded the route at alpine AD, and we decided to recommend the name Peak AC 150.

We next tackled Dhanesh Parvat, by a glacier approach from the south. We established Camp 1 at the confluence with the main Barmal Glacier and Camp 2 at 5,000m on the tributary glacier. Mick and I left Camp 2 at 1 a.m., yet still found ourselves postholing in soft snow at 2 a.m. The glacier headwall led to a narrow snow ridge running north to a broader saddle below the west ridge of Dhanesh Parvat. The west ridge rose steeply to a narrow crest of snow and rock running into the sheer face of the granite summit block. For two hours we probed cracks choked with snow, overhanging flakes, and a chimney full of unstable semi-iced-in blocks, before conceding defeat and retreating down the ridge. Then, from below, we spotted a narrow snow ramp rising under the overhanging north face of the summit monolith. Two pitches of doubtful

snow that seemed on the verge of sliding into the void led to the east face of the summit block. Sun-warmed rock just the right side of vertical rose in cracks and narrow ledges towards a summit that we reached in two pitches with moves of V/V+. We rappelled to the west ridge. We estimate the grade at D.

The third peak, which lies to the east of the Kankul Khal, was climbed by Chris and Mark from a camp below the pass. They ascended a couloir falling west from the north ridge of the main summit, then, finding the ridge holding wet snow, traversed into a rocky couloir on the east face. The couloir more or less paralleled the ridge, below it, to the summit. The map indicated the peak's elevation as 5,080m, though the GPS reading was lower than for AC 150. They graded the route at about AD and recommended Kankul Peak for its name.

Having run out of time, we retraced our steps to Bhuidhar, where we celebrated the 150th birthday with a memorable party, complete with cake. The expedition was a superb way of celebrating the roots of both clubs in exploratory mountaineering. Thanks are due to Harish for proposing the trip and making the Indian arrangements, and to Mark for coordinating the UK end. Thanks are also due to the Alpine Club climbing fund for financial support.

DAVE WYNNE-JONES, *Alpine Club*